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A study designed to (1) determine approximately the percentage of Florida industrial employers who do or would employ Negroes for sales, clerical, professional, and supervisory-type jobs and to learn something about the attitudes of these employers towards hiring well-educated Negroes and college graduates; (2) determine the percentage of Negroes in selected professions in Florida; and (3) learn something about the home and school backgrounds, scholastic aptitudes, interests, aspirations, and achievements of Bethune-Cookman College students as they relate to Florida job opportunities. (Microfilm copy of complete manuscript available from University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, $3.05.)

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A STUDY OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA FOR NEGRO COLLEGE GRADUATES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STUDENTS OF BETHUNE-COOKMAN COLLEGE

Paul M. Decker, Ed. D.

An Abstract of Research Study No. 1
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

at

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1958

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A STUDY OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA FOR NEGRO COLLEGE GRADUATES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STUDENTS OF BETHUNE-COOKMAN COLLEGE

(L. C. Card No. Mic 59-92)†

Paul M. Decker, Ed.D.‡

1. Purposes and Problems of the Study

The general purposes of the study have been to investigate the present job opportunities in the State of Florida for Negro college graduates and to search for changes which are taking place in the South in relation to the hiring of Negro workers.

The specific problems of the study have been: (1) to determine approximately what percentage of defined Florida industrial employers do or would employ Negroes for sales, clerical, professional, and supervisory type jobs, and to learn something about the attitudes of these employers with regard to the hiring of well educated Negroes and college graduates; (2) to determine approximately what percentage of the people in selected professions in Florida are Negro; and (3) to learn something about the home and school backgrounds, scholastic aptitudes, interests, aspirations, and achievements of Bethune-Cookman College students as they relate to Florida job opportunities.

The study is important because it offers information which can be used by the guidance center of Bethune-Cookman College in the placement of graduates and other students of the College, and offers realistic information to the administrators of the College as an aid in the development of new curriculum patterns.

2. Methods of Procedure

The major type of research employed has been the normative survey method. The major groups surveyed were: (1) industrial employers; (2) non-industrial organizations and experts; (3) Florida, United States Employment Agencies; (4) Chambers of Commerce in Florida; and (5) students and alumni of Bethune-Cookman College.

The latest United States and Florida Census and other statistical data were analyzed to determine economic and occupational

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‡ An abstract of Research Study No. 1 submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Colorado State College, 1958.

conditions and trends in general and especially for Negroes in Florida.

Records and test scores of Bethune-Cookman College students and alumni were scrutinized to determine academic achievement, personality, and interests, and these groups were further surveyed to determine socio-economic backgrounds, job aspirations, and achievement in occupational areas.

Professional organizations and experts in various fields as well as a random 20 per cent sample of defined Florida industries were contacted by questionnaire to determine where and what number of Negro college graduates were being employed in clerical, professional, and supervisory type jobs.

The state was then divided into nine geographical areas and each area studied separately through information furnished by employment agencies, chambers of commerce, and Negroes living in the areas.

4. Conclusions Based on Findings

a. Industrial Job Opportunities

The first group to be surveyed was Florida industrial employers. Many expressed a willingness toward hiring more Negro workers in better type jobs but there is still considerable hesitancy to break with tradition.

1. Although about one-half of Florida industrial employers expressed a willingness to hire Negro college graduates in sales, clerical, professional, and supervisory type jobs, only about 5 per cent were doing so as of June, 1957.
2. About 80 per cent of Florida industrial employers state that they "think the rate of pay for Negroes should be equal to others on the same job."
3. About 60 per cent of Florida industrial employers expressed the feeling that Negroes are not dependable on the job.
4. A common feeling among employers seemed to be that as long as qualified white workers are available, "inertia" will prevent a change to Negro workers.

The first four conclusions are based on answers to questionnaires sent to 425 industrial organizations in Florida during the first six months of 1957. Manufacturers of various types accounted for 71 per cent of the respondents, and food processors and packers for 21 per cent.

Of the 425 respondents, 59 per cent employ white college trained persons, and 5 per cent employ Negro college trained persons. Of the 1,830 college trained persons reported as employed, only 60 or 3.1 per cent are Negro. About 9 per cent of the 1955 Florida college enrollment consisted of Negro students.

A 20 per cent random sample was chosen from the Directory of Florida Industries. How well this sample represents the total defined population was determined by computing the standard error of a percentage in relation to the number of employers who answered a "key question" in the affirmative. The obtained percentage was found to be not more than 4.7 per cent away from the population value, or 49.2 ± 4.7 at the 5 per cent level of confidence.

A high degree of reliability for the sample may be assumed from the fact that as questionnaires were returned they were tabulated in groups of fifty and the per cent of affirmative answers to a key question in the eight groups were found to be 50.0, 50.0, 46.0, 52.0, 47.0, 48.0, 51.0, and 50.0 per cent respectively and these failed to show a significant difference in proportions at the 5 per cent level of confidence. It was also shown that the 425 businesses were very representative of the type businesses being studied and that they were well distributed from a geographical point of view.

A significant degree of validation can be assumed for the sample by noting the high relationship between percentages of Negroes reported in respective occupational classifications in this study as compared to the 1950 Census. Also various precautions were taken during the study and during the period of construction of the questionnaire. For example, (1) the items during construction were discussed with various employers and personnel men; (2) the questionnaires were tested on twenty-five local employers as to understanding of items and ease of scoring; (3) spot checks were made during the study to verify statements made by those filling out the questionnaires.

b. Non-industrial Job Opportunities

Over 20 per cent of the Florida population is Negro. Negroes in the professions, however, except for teachers and clergymen, are not represented in that percentage. The following five conclusions are based on analysis of information obtained from various schools, professional organizations, and authorities, and from analysis of the 1950 Census of Population.

1. Most professional Negroes are employed as public school teachers. The superintendent of Florida public schools states that there were 6,635 employed by the State of Florida in March, 1957 and this is slightly over 20 per cent of all Florida public school teachers. Eighty-two per cent of the Negro teachers are female.
2. Predictions are that about 400 new Negro teachers will be hired each year for the next few years in Florida public schools. Past records indicate that about 110 or 27 per cent of these each year will be from Bethune- Cookman College.
3. About 8.5 per cent of college teachers in Florida are Negro.

About 1 per cent of Bethune-Cookman College graduates are college teachers and of these over one-half teach at Bethune-Cookman.

4. The 1950 United States Census Report lists 3,466 clergymen in Florida of which 28 per cent are shown to be Negro. However, other authorities in the field say there are about 5,000 ordained Negro ministers in Florida, 100 of which have college degrees.

5. In other selected professions, according to data from professional organizations and census reports, the Negro in Florida is represented as follows: physicians and surgeons, 3.2 per cent; dentists, 4.0 per cent; nurses, 6.1 per cent; pharmacists, 2.4 per cent; librarians, 6.6 per cent; musicians and music teachers, 7.9 per cent; social welfare and recreational workers, 5.7 per cent; and medical and dental technicians, 2.5 per cent. Artists, authors, editors and reporters, chemists, and draftsmen and designers all were between 1 and 2 per cent, and accountants, architects, all types of engineers, surveyors, and attorneys and judges are all under 1 per cent.

c. The Bethune-Cookman Student

The final seven conclusions listed below concerning Bethune-Cookman College students were based on interpretation and analysis of findings obtained (1) by questionnaires to the entire student body in May, 1957; (2) by questionnaires to a 20 per cent stratified random sample of Bethune-Cookman alumni; and (3) by examination and analysis of scores on various achievement, interest, and personality tests and inventories, which were collected over a period of years.

1. About 15 per cent of the parents of Bethune-Cookman students are proprietors or professional, clerical, or sales workers. Seventy-three per cent of the working mothers are service workers, mostly in private households. Sixty-five per cent of the fathers are laborers or service workers.

2. When students arrive at Bethune-Cookman they are poorly prepared for college work. Typical class means in terms of freshmen national percentile norms in the Cooperative, and California Achievement Tests are: social studies, 8th percentile; natural sciences, 10th percentile; mathematics, 12th percentile; public affairs, 4th percentile; total English scores, 7th percentile. By the time they leave college 85 per cent of the students still rank below the 25th percentile in all areas in achievement tests.

3. On the California Mental Health Analysis Inventory the mean raw scores for Bethune-Cookman College students were found to fall at the 90th percentile in the area of "social participation," at the 20th in "behavorial immaturity," and below the 30th in "emotional instability," and "feelings of inadequacy."

4. On the Kuder Preference Record the mean raw scores for Bethune-Cookman College students were found to fall below the 50th percentile in the areas of scientific, literary, and mechanical interests. Men's scores were at the 75th percentile in social service, and at the 68th percentile in musical interests, and women were highest in social service interests at the 63rd percentile.

5. About 85 per cent of the Bethune-Cookman student body indicated in a May, 1957 questionnaire that they planned to teach school after graduation. Three per cent plan further study in the fields of medicine and engineering. Two per cent each plan to enter the social and secretarial fields. About one per cent plan to become librarians, artists or missionaries, or to go into government work, or the Armed Services.

6. Responses to a questionnaire by a 20 per cent stratified random sample of Bethune-Cookman alumni in 1957 indicated that they are employed as follows: Principals, 7 per cent; elementary teachers, 33 per cent; secondary teachers, 23 per cent; out of state teachers, 6 per cent; music and other teachers, 9 per cent; librarians, 3 per cent; secretarial work, 3 per cent; retired, 2 per cent; housewives, 3 per cent; looking for a teaching job, 3 per cent; and other, 8 per cent.

7. By February 1, 1957, 75 per cent of the June, 1956 Bethune-Cookman College women graduates were employed in full time teaching jobs at an average salary of $303.00 per month.

VITA

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Industrial Engineer, Personnel Director, Kreger Packing Company
War Production Job Instructor, Training within Industry
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